

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 – 24 were presented for examination. These include independent claims 1, 12, 16, and 19. In accordance with the present amendment, claims 19 – 24 have been canceled from the application in order to focus the examination on the process of the present invention. Claims 19 – 24, although canceled, are withdrawn without prejudice to resubmit these claims in a subsequently filed application.

Certainly one aspect of the present invention relates to a process for removing VOCs having different boiling points, from a common sorbent. This can be an expensive process as significant heat can be required. In accordance with the present invention, applicant teaches that separate sorbates having different boiling points can be addressed in a dual-phase process where only reduced volumes need be exposed to the expensive elevated temperatures. Furthermore, applicant teaches how valuable sorbates can be condensed and sold to offset the cost of the process. These features are neither disclosed nor contemplated in the patents issued to Mattia (3,455,089 and 4,231,764); nor is there any contemplation of such a process in the secondary reference to Burkholder et al (4,421,651).

New Claim 25 specifically recites a process for drying wood in different volumes and at different temperatures using microwave energy, and condensing at least one of the sorbates for subsequent sale. This claim specifically recites steps in a process which is neither disclosed nor contemplated by the recited art.

With the foregoing amendments, it is believed that all of the claims remaining in the present application clearly and specifically distinguish the processes of the prior art.

Accordingly, the Examiner's reconsideration and allowance of the application is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 27, 2003

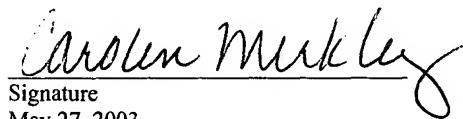


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May 27, 2003

by Carolen Merkley



Signature
May 27, 2003

Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

In the Claims:

Claims 19 –24 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

Claim 1 (Amended) A method for removing a first sorbate and a second sorbate from a sorbent, the first sorbate in combination with the sorbent having a first desorption activation energy and the second sorbate combination with the sorbent having a second desorption activation energy higher than the first desorption activation energy, the method comprising the steps of:

contacting the first sorbate, the second sorbate, and the sorbent in a first stage with a stripping fluid having a first temperature sufficient to separate and release a portion of the first sorbate in a vapor phase from the second sorbate and the sorbent;

combusting the first sorbate;

heating the second sorbate and the sorbent to a second temperature higher than the first temperature to separate at least a portion of the second sorbate in a vapor phase from the sorbent; ~~and~~

condensing the second sorbate to change the second sorbate from the vapor phase to the liquid phase; and

selling the condensed second sorbate to offset the costs of the process.

Claim 16 has been amended as follows:

16. Amended A method for removing a first sorbate and a second sorbate from a sorbent, the first sorbate in combination with the sorbent having a first desorption activation energy and the second sorbate combination with the sorbent having a second desorption activation energy higher than the first desorption activation energy, the method comprising the steps of:

contacting the first sorbate, the second sorbate, and the sorbent in a desorption chamber with a fluid having a first temperature to separate the first sorbate in a vapor phase from the second sorbate and the sorbent;

disposing of the first sorbate in the vapor phase;

following the contacting step, heating the second sorbate and the sorbent in the desorption chamber to a second temperature sufficient to separate the second sorbate in a vapor phase from the sorbent; and

condensing the second sorbate in the vapor phase to change the second sorbate to the liquid phase; and

selling the condensed second sorbate to offset the costs of the process.

Please add the following new Claim 25.

Claim 25 (New) A process for drying wood, comprising the steps of:

heating the wood;

during the heating step, driving off VOCs in the form of a first sorbate
having a first boiling point and a second sorbate having a second boiling point higher
than the first boiling point;

sorbing the first and second sorbates onto a resin-based sorbent;

in a first-stage, exposing the sorbent and the first and second sorbates in a
first volume to a temperature greater than the first boiling point to release the first
sorbate from the sorbent;

in a second stage, exposing the sorbent and at least the second sorbate in
a second volume less than the first volume to microwave energy sufficient to heat the
second sorbate to a temperature greater than the second boiling point to release the
second sorbate from the sorbent;

condensing at least one of the first sorbate released from the first stage and
the second sorbate released from the second stage; and

selling the condensed sorbate to offset the cost of the process.